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Do you think the program and the educational environment helped promote your research?



Path to the lab

I think the program and educational environment promoted my research. Very different from the French system, the master's program in Japan is research-oriented and every student belongs to a laboratory. I feel very lucky that the atmosphere in my laboratory is extremely friendly and relaxed, very different from the image I had of a Japanese research environment. There is a lot of mutual assistance between students. My research subject differs slightly from the other research topics of my laboratory, and I started a new

experiment with two other students using a newly acquired machine. Although being 'pioneers' is very exciting, the lack of 'senpai' or professor in the laboratory to teach and help us, made progress very slow and mistakes frequent.

Suggestions and/or criticisms for space of improvement

It was at first difficult to understand how the Japanese university and laboratory system work, what is the equipment available, how to make reservations, who to ask the way to use a device, etc... As an international student, there were a lot of implicit codes and rules that took some time to understand and assimilate. I sometimes had the impression I had wasted time looking for information and it would have been more productive and efficient if being given all the information in the first place.

In Japan, I feel students are more independent with their research project and receive less guidance from their supervisors; they are encouraged to try many things and learn from mistakes. I think this is challenging and rather different from my home country (France), where I had the impression that the project's objectives and experiments were more precisely decided from the start, with a stronger support from the professors. I am glad I could experience both teaching and research approaches.

Living in Sendai: Experience Advice, and leisure

Tips for new arrivals. (e.g., food and traffic can be more expensive than the cost in your country)



Nishi park during cherry blossom

I really enjoyed living in Sendai! The city size is perfect, this is not a very touristic spot, but the Tohoku region has a lot to offer.

In Sendai, subway is the main public transport. It is more expensive than in my home university town (Lyon), especially the short ride to go back and forth Aobayama campus to the city centre. In addition, the shared bicycle service, which was a very cheap way to move in Lyon is little developed in Sendai.

Eating out in Japan is very unexpensive compared to France. Japanese supermarkets' prices are slightly higher compared to France, especially vegetables and fruits. I highly recommend buying fresh

products at Asaichi (朝市 farmer's market) or small vegetable shops around in the city. The quantities often are on the smaller side. Overall, without excessively buying imported products, I would say the cost of food is about the same as is France.

What is the monthly cost of maintenance in Sendai beyond the dormitory?

I think there is no general rule for the monthly spendings as it varies from a student to another! As for me, I walk whenever possible, because I like it and to save on transportation. Per month, I think I spend about 37,000 to 45,000 yens on food (including grocery, restaurants, nomikai, etc...), on average about 15,000 yens on transportation (mostly for trips), 2,000 yens on Japanese National Health Insurance, about 5,000 yens on hobbies, and maybe some other extra expenses.

Preparation for essential items for maintenance prior to arrival: living accessories, manuals of various kinds, etc.

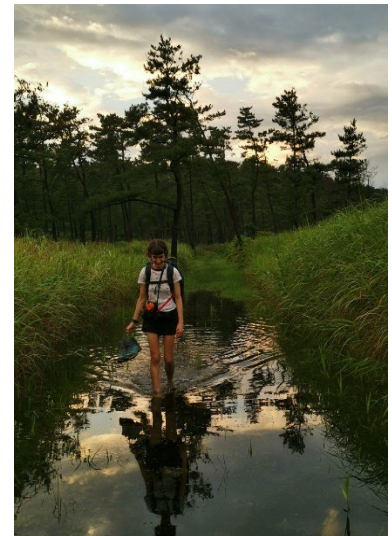
I live in the residence Aobayama University house. In addition to the rent, there are many amenities that are mandatory to rent (sheets, bathmat, cutlery, ...). The bedroom, kitchen and bathroom are fully equipped. I only had to buy towels upon arrival. Although being the most expensive dormitory of TU, UH Aobayama is still less expensive than what I would pay in France. There is nothing specific one should need that cannot be found in Japan. The 100 yens shop are very helpful upon arrival for buying various house items.

Difficulties you may encounter after arriving in Japan. (e.g., shopping, hospitality) If any.

I did not encounter any difficulty after arriving in Japan thanks to the support of my laboratory, the international student exchange division, a SNS group of students from my home university and my new friends in Japan.

Leisure

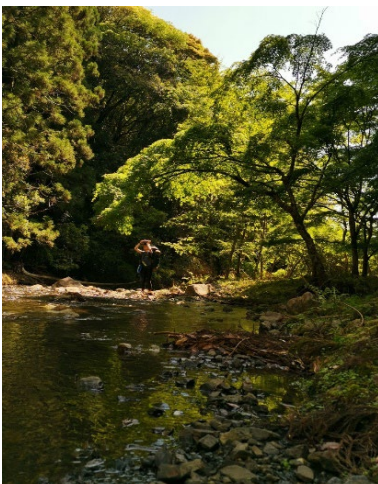
In my free time, I enjoy running or doing other sports (bouldering, swimming...), cooking, having dinner with friends, doing small day trips, etc... I am also given French lessons three times a month. During the (few) holidays, I travel as much as I can in Japan, mostly visiting historical and nature spots, hiking and camping.



Michinoku shiogaze trail

Career paths

Pursuing graduate school degree (including PhD) at home university or Tohoku University.



Kumano kodo pilgrimage

I am currently in the application process for a PhD in Australia. Although I would have loved to stay in Sendai or in Japan, I gave priority to the research subject I want to pursue my education in.

I also think that the current academic system in Japan is not encouraging master students to pursue on PhD. There is little difference between master's and doctoral programs. As opposed to most European countries, PhD students do not automatically receive an income and need to apply independently for a scholarship, the application process of which is often very tedious and time-consuming.